1: Holmberg--50 (1941-42) 1950 Siriono
586

"A man generally takes no part in the fights that break out between his wives; indeed he is usually away on the hunt when they occur. Only if they occur too frequently or become too violent does the husband interfere. Under these conditions he may threaten with divorce the wife standing lower in his favor, in order to keep peace in the family."

"Only in one birth which I observed was there any question of the paternity involved or a reluctance on the part of a woman's husband to accept her child as his. Of course, considering the sexual freedom allowed by the Siriono, the true paternity of a child would be difficult to determine, but, as far as the group is concerned, it is only the social role of the father that is important. In the case referred to, one of the wives of Eóko left for the hunt before the infant was born but knew that his wife was in labor. She gave birth to a girl about 8 a.m. I was present at the birth and spent the day observing postnatal events, and, like the mother, waiting for Eóko to return and to cut the cord. We waited patiently until about 5 p.m., but Eóko had not yet returned. As a somewhat partial observer at this stage, I became concerned that the infant might die from an infection of the cord and placenta, which had been exposed to the flies the entire day, but upon making the suggestion that the cord should be cut, I was told by the mother and other informants that it was necessary to await the arrival of Eóko. Finally he returned, in company with other hunters, just as the sun was going down. He had shot a few keN (capuchin monkeys) which he threw down by the hammock of his first wife, paying no attention, however, to the mother and the newborn infant. In fact, he cast not so much as a glance in their direction.

Meanwhile, the mother took out a piece of bamboo and sat patiently on the ground waiting for Eóko to cut the cord. Instead of so doing, he lay down in his hammock and ordered his first wife to extract the thorns from his hands and feet. This operation took

approximately half an hour, by which time it was fairly obvious to all present that Eóko had no intention of cutting the cord. Women began to gather. Seáci, who was Eóko's niece, came up to me and said softly: 'You speak to Eóko; tell him to cut the cord.' I replied: 'No, you speak to him.' She was afraid to do so. Then one of Eóko's relatives remarked that Eóko claimed the child was not his, that he had 'divorced' this woman some time before. Following this declaration, one of the mother's female relatives came forward and publicly demanded that [74] Eóko cut the cord. He paid no attention whatsoever to her but continued to lie in his hammock and smoke his pipe. The mother of the infant took no part in the proceedings but continued to sit quietly on the ground with the child. Darkness set in. The mother's female relatives continued to put pressure on Eóko to cut the cord. Finally, after about an hour, he got up from his hammock, called for a calabash of water, and took a hasty bath. He then stooped down, took the bamboo knife from the mother, and severed the cord, thereby recognizing the child as his. Before doing so, however, he emphatically stated that the child was not his and that he was only cutting the cord to prevent the death of the child.

Eóko's reluctance to accept the infant as his was clearly reflected in his behavior during the period of couvade. He acted as if he did not care whether the infant lived or died. He paid no attention whatsoever to the mother, and although he was decorated with feathers like every father of a newborn child, he underwent few of the other observances

designed to protect and insure the life and health of the infant. He was not scarified on the legs, for instance, nor did he observe the rules of staying close to the house. He paid no attention to the food taboos and took no part in the rites terminating the couvade. He repeatedly told me that he had 'divorced' this woman and that he would have nothing more to do with her. This was borne out by subsequent events."

1: Holmberg -- 83 (1941-42) 1950 Siriono
116, 586

"Divorce is relatively easy and is usually caused by adultery or by too frequent intercourse with potential spouses to the neglect of the real spouse. The men always divorce the women, i.e., they 'cast them out' or 'throw them away.' In instances of this kind, the woman usually immediately marries one of her potential spouses with whom she has been having sex relations. Divorces are not common. Women are an asset as long as they can work and bear children, and more than one wife is a mark of status. Thus, although men frequently threaten to divorce their wives so as to keep them in line, they actually rarely ever do so."